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THE PSYCHIC SERIES

No. 1

OUIJA BOARD

AND

AUTOMATIC WRITING

(HOW TO DO IT)

By HERWARD CARRINGTON, Ph.D.



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OUIJA BOARD AND AUTOMATIC WRITING

The OUIJA BOARD is a small, varnished board, containing upon it the letters of the alphabet, "Yes" in one upper corner, "No," in the other, and "Good-bye" at the bottom of the Board. The figures from 1 to 9, and a 0, are also placed in a row upon the lower portion of the board. In this manner, any message can be spelled out, merely by pointing to the letters of the alphabet, one after the other.

With the Board is also provided a small, heart-shaped "Pointer," upon which the sitters place their hands. This has, attached to its under side, three felt-covered feet, enabling it to move and slide about the board with ease. The "pointer" of this board is that part which designates the letters spelled out.

HOW IT IS OPERATED

The sitters who operate the board usually sit opposite one another, with the board upon a low table, or held upon their knees. One sitter or two or more may place their hands upon the board

at the same time. One or both hands may be placed upon the pointer—some sitters preferring one hand, others both; some use the right hand and others the left.

The *mind* of the person operating the board should be more or less blank, or otherwise occupied; though it need not be entirely negative. At first, it will be difficult for the operator to keep his mind from the board; his natural curiosity will make him want to know what it writes! But this is the worst thing possible, and tends to shut off communications. The letters, as they are spelled out, should be noted down by another person, and if necessary deciphered afterwards. The operator should not busy himself as to what the board is spelling out. Activity of mind will shut off the best manifestations!

HOW TO TEST YOUR POWER

A very good test of your own powers is to sit at the board blindfold. See whether or not you can obtain consistent messages under these conditions. Many have obtained them in this manner—Mrs. Hester Travers Smith, in her book “Voices from the Void,” obtaining nearly all her communications in this manner. This is a very good

test, and shows that you yourself are not really consciously doing the writing.

Some writers are enabled to read a book while they are writing; and the famous Mrs. Piper, at one time in her career, was enabled to write with the right and left hands, and talk, all at the same time, and upon different topics!

The PLANCHETTE BOARD is operated very much in the same way as the Ouija Board, and depends upon the same general principles. In this case, however, no board is used, but a sheet of plain paper is used instead. In place of the third felt leg, a *pencil* is inserted as the “pointer,” and this writes the messages direct upon the paper. In some ways, this is better than the Ouija Board, inasmuch as a permanent record of the writing is left afterwards.

TWO PROBLEMS INVOLVED

There are two factors concerned in the Ouija Board and Planchette. These are (1) the actual *movement* of the board itself; and (2) what the board *says*. That is, the physical problem and the psychological problem.

As to the physical problem, there is nothing very miraculous about this in the majority of

cases. It is due to unconscious muscular action on the part of the writer or writers. Unconsciously, they push the board. In some cases, however, it seems that a force or power is generated by this process; and the board has been seen to move about for some seconds after the hands of the sitters have been withdrawn. But this is rare, and, in the majority of cases, as before said, unconscious muscular action will serve to explain the results.

That, however, is not the point! Assuming this to be true, the primary problem still remains: How account for what the board *says*? Even if it is pushed about unconsciously, it often says queer things—things which the sitters themselves did not know! This, then, is the problem. How account for this supernormal knowledge? How are we to explain the information—the facts—which the Ouija Board or the Planchette writes out? I shall answer this question later on, when explaining automatic writing—which is in principle closely connected with the Ouija Board and Planchette.

Automatic writing means writing which is performed without the use of the conscious mind, that

is, writing which is performed by the unconscious muscular energies of the hand and arm; hence automatic or non-conscious writing. A pencil is taken in the ordinary way and held over a piece of paper, and in a short time it will be noticed that slight movements of the pencil occur, making scrawling marks on the paper. As time goes on, these marks become more and more consistent and consecutive. They begin to form circles, hooks, etc., until letters, then words, and finally whole sentences are written out.

HOW TO OBTAIN AUTOMATIC WRITING

The best way to obtain automatic writing is to hold the arm clear of the table—that is, so that neither the wrist, nor the elbows, nor any part of the arm touches it. In this way a certain amount of fatigue is soon induced in the arm, and, as soon as this occurs, automatic writing tends to begin.

In obtaining writing of this character you must be careful to abstract your conscious guidance from the hand as much as possible, leaving it to itself. Do not try to write anything of your own volition; let it guide itself, even if it writes nonsense at first.

Some persons obtain writing more easily if the

pencil is placed between the first and second fingers, but whatever way is most convenient to you should be adopted in cultivating automatic writing.

Make the mind as blank as possible. After a time you may be able to think of other things at the same time, carry on a train of conversation, read a book, etc., at the same time that your hand is writing the messages; but it is improbable that you will be able to do this at first. The first thing is to make the mind blank and await results.

TWO IMPORTANT RULES TO FOLLOW

When developing automatic writing, you should sit for *not longer* than fifteen or twenty minutes daily and, if possible, *always at the same time*. It is very important that these two rules be observed, for two reasons:

In the first place your spirit friends, who are doubtless trying to help you in your writing, would come to assist you at certain stated times more easily than irregularly, especially if you told them exactly at what time to come. It is a good plan to say aloud, just when you have finished the writing: "Good-bye, tomorrow at the same time we will sit again for the messages!"

In the second place the time should be limited. When you obtain writing of this character you are apt to get so interested in the results, when once spirits begin to come, and so curious in seeing what your hand says, that you will lose all account of time, and, if you have nothing urgent to do, are liable to run on hour after hour writing automatically and replying to the messages you receive. If you do this for any length of time you will break down the "wall of defence" which normally exists against outside influences. Mr. W. T. Stead, the well-known journalist and spiritualist, once stated that he considered these two warnings of the utmost importance, and attributed his own success (and the fact that he had never encountered any difficulties or any trouble in his automatic writing) to the fact that he had heeded strictly this advice.

HOW AUTOMATIC WRITING IS ACCOMPLISHED

Automatic writing is doubtless performed by the subconscious muscular action on the part of the hand and arm of the writer, that is in the majority of cases. But this does not serve to "explain" it, as many people believe. Granting that the actual writing is obtained in this way,

the question remains "How about the information which is often obtained by means of the writing, information which the writer could not possibly have known by any normal means?" For instance, suppose you are sitting at your table, pencil in hand, waiting to see what is written. Your hand writes: "I am James Valentine. I was killed in a railroad accident this afternoon at four o'clock." Granting that your own hand actually moved the pencil to write this message, where did this piece of information come from? How did your mind know what to write, and the fact that James Valentine had been killed? That is the question which remains to be solved, and is the one which the majority of scientists who have undertaken to investigate and explain these phenomena slur over and leave altogether unexplained. In many other cases, also, the power seems to be greater than the medium alone could have produced and in such cases, an outside power was doubtless employed, as in many "physical phenomena."

THE CHARACTER OF THE MESSAGES RECEIVED

Many of the messages you receive, especially at first, will doubtless prove incoherent and disconnected, like dreams; in fact they *are* dreams,

only instead of seeing these thoughts in visions, they are written out by your own hand. In both cases, however, it is your dream-consciousness (subconsciousness) which originates the messages or the visions.

In many cases, however, clear and consistent messages are written and these may be supernatural and show evidence of telepathy, clairvoyance, premonition, or spirit-communication, just as dreams do. Many mediums obtain their messages direct by automatic writing. Mrs. Piper of Boston, in many ways the most famous medium in the history of Psychics, obtained nearly all her communications in this manner. In her case, she passes into very deep trance while writing and has to be supported by cushions. In your own case, it is improbable that you will go into trance at first—though you may have a tendency to do so, and if you begin to feel sleepy or drowsy during the writing, you should give way to this and allow yourself to pass into the trance-condition. In this state many of the best messages are obtained. It is advisable, however, to do this for the first few times only in the presence of an experienced medium or psychic, who can attend to you

during the period of trance, and who will ask questions to which your hand can reply, etc.

PHENOMENA WHICH MAY OCCUR DURING THE WRITING

This feeling of drowsiness appears very often in automatic writing, but it is not universal. Many mediums who obtain remarkable messages in this manner have never passed into trance and have no desire to do so; they remain perfectly normal throughout.

It may be that when you begin to write, your hand and arm will show signs of insensibility; that is, it will lose its sensation and any feeling of pain, etc. It becomes, as we say, anæsthetic. You may be quite unconscious of this fact and only discover it by an accident. A good plan is to have a friend test it for you. When you are obtaining automatic writing, close your eyes and turn your head away, then ask your friend to prick you very lightly with a needle in various parts of your hands and arms and see whether you experience any pain. It is quite possible that you will not do so, even if the pricks are severe. It is curious to note, however, that these pricks are noticed by the subconscious mind, for it often

happens that the hand will write automatically: "You are hurting me," or "you pricked me in the third finger-joint," or something of the kind while you yourself might remain totally ignorant of the fact, so far as any consciousness of it was concerned. It is important for you to remember that automatic writing, like all messages of a like character, must be judged and accepted for what it is worth.

MORE PHENOMENA

Some of these messages are very remarkable, and contain sound advice which can be followed with profit. Some doubtless originate from those spirit friends who claim to give them. On the other hand, many of them are foolish, lying or merely silly, so that here, as in all other cases, discrimination must be used, and you must exert your own common-sense and judgment in the matter of accepting these messages, and you must see to what extent you may be willing to abide and profit by the advice given.

It sometimes happens that automatic writing forms letters, but these appear curiously shaped and the words cannot be read; sometimes it begins at the right hand side of the page and writes

toward the left, like Hebrew. When this is the case it is always a good plan to hold the sheet of paper up to a mirror to see whether the writing can be read in this way. If so, the writing has been merely reversed, and is what we term "mirror-writing."

Some persons can write with the left hand as well as with the right, but usually this is not the case, except with left-handed persons. The reason seems to be that the left hand is poorly developed as a writing machine. For this reason, we can hardly expect any intelligence who may desire to give messages to find this an easy way of expressing them! Still it may be tried after writing has been obtained by the right hand.

Occasionally messages are given in foreign languages or in queer tongues, unknown to the sitter. These may be genuine messages and if they come in a language unknown to you, you may be more or less assured that they emanate from some spirit friend who speaks the language in question. Occasionally, however, your hand will write "gibberish," and there are many cases on record where this has been done and no true language has been written.

HOW TO DEVELOP THE POWER

It is a good plan to sit in a semi-darkened room while obtaining automatic writing, in a comfortable position and with the mind as free from care and preoccupation as possible. Automatic writing may, however, be obtained in a light room, if desired.

Telepathic experiments may be tried in this manner: A friend of yours tries to impress upon you certain words, cards, figures, etc., which your hand writes automatically.

The writing, you must remember, is only another method for the subconscious to express itself to the conscious mind, and happens to be a motor-channel rather than a sensory-channel. If it were the latter, you would see or hear the message instead of writing it. In both cases, however, the phenomena represent mere "emergence."

It is not necessary to write automatically with a pencil, for a Planchette-Board, Ouija-Board or some other apparatus may be used for this purpose. Indeed, this is a much simpler method to begin with, and writing is obtained more easily than by the pencil alone. Most people find it more satisfactory, however, to discard these instruments later on, and employ the pencil direct.

The above rules should enable the student to obtain automatic writing in a comparatively short time. *Patience* is required here as elsewhere. Hold the mind in a receptive attitude, send out a mental call for guidance and wisdom, and do not come to the conclusion too quickly that the messages you receive are nonsense. Often a jumble of letters that, at first sight, mean nothing, may form a very significant message, when rightly interpreted.

Your Psychic Powers And How to Develop Them

By HERWARD CARRINGTON, PH.D. *Author of "Modern Psychical Phenomena," "The Coming Science," "True Ghost Stories," etc.*

Thousands of persons to-day are experimenting at random in an endeavor to induce psychic phenomena, with the usual result that they either get no results, or run into unknown dangers and difficulties. The present work is designed to advise and assist all such persons in their development, warn of possible dangers, and give sound advice as to methods of personal and group development. However, the book is of great interest and value to the general reader, no less than to those wishing to develop their psychic powers. This, the most complete work of its kind thus far written, is by a recognized authority, and is based upon years of careful research and experimentation. It covers such topics as: How to Develop; Crystal Gazing; Automatic Writing; The Cultivation of Sensitiveness; Symbolism; Colors; Dreams; Trances; Physical Phenomena; Spiritual Healing; Obsession, Its Prevention and Cure; Snares and Pitfalls to Avoid, etc.; Psychometry; Clairvoyance; Telepathy. Practical advice is given, as well as exercises for psychical development.

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